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BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - V

East German Memorandum to Berlin Conference: The 30 January memorandum of the East German government, which repeats in detail past proposals by the Soviet Union for a peace treaty and elections controlled by a provisional government, again suggests that the Kremlin is not prepared to make any significantly new proposals on Germany at Berlin.

The proposed peace treaty duplicates that submitted by the Soviet Union on 10 March 1952 and resubmitted on 15 August 1953, including provisions for maintaining the Oder-Neisse boundary, prohibiting German participation in military alliances, and withdrawing foreign troops and bases one year after the treaty is signed.

The 15 August 1953 Soviet plan for a provisional all-German government is repeated nearly verbatim, with the exception of the previous suggestion that the East and West German governments could continue to function. There is no proposal on the proportion of East and West German representation.

One of the new features of this memorandum is the clarification of the Communist concept of free elections. They must be conducted by the provisional government without any interference from foreign powers. As a further prerequisite, the memorandum demands the abrogation of the Bonn and Paris treaties, described as the main obstacles to free elections. The memorandum specifies that conditions in West Germany provide a threat to free elections and require additional safeguards. All "militarist" and "fascist" organizations must be prohibited. "Humanist" literature must be disseminated throughout Germany, but literature containing incitements to war and "revanchism" must be prohibited. Monopolists and large estate owners are to be prevented from giving financial aid to political parties, and no one may be persecuted for "democratic views or activities." These provisions recall Molotov's recent statement to Eden that the important thing was to decide what kind of government would result from elections before they took place.

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The memorandum further calls for a peace conference in 1954 with the participation of all countries that took part in the war against Germany. But it clarifies early Soviet proposals for such a conference by specifying that the four powers and the provisional government should prepare beforehand a treaty to submit to the conference.

A new demand which reflects current Communist propaganda is that no atomic or bacteriological weapons shall be developed, manufactured or stationed on German soil. Other demands which reflect Communist charges of West German remilitarization are that there shall be no German troops or rearmament until a peace treaty is signed and that no German shall participate in any foreign military organization, even on German soil.

The use of the East German government to offer this proposal continues the fiction of a popular German voice in the conference contained in the original demand for German representation at the conference. It also gives Molotov somewhat more flexibility in maneuvering than if he had made the initial maximum demands. Nevertheless, the uncompromising nature of these proposals and the weakness of the Soviet position in Germany suggest that whatever concessions Molotov may make will be minor.

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